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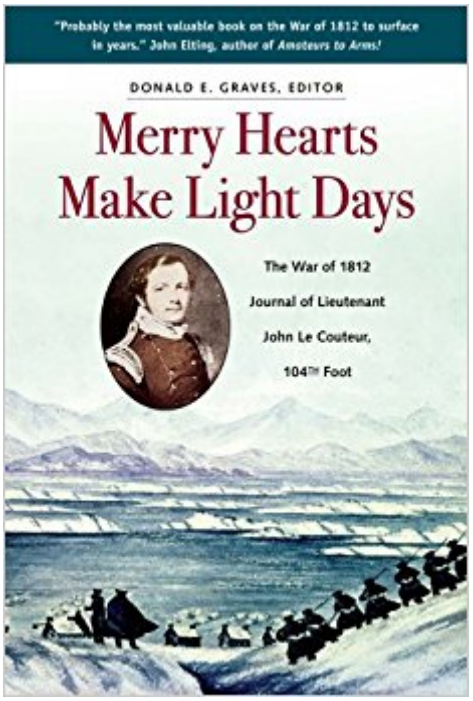
Merry Hearts Make Light Days: The War Of 1812 Journal Of Lieutenant John Le Couteur, 104th Foot



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Synopsis

In 1812, seventeen-year-old John Le Couteur, a British officer, arrived in Nova Scotia to learn that war had broken out between the United States and Great Britain. For the next three years he campaigned from Halifax to Buffalo, and he left this entertaining memoir of his experiences of storm-tossed voyages, arduous winter marches, battles and the perils of courtship, played out against the splendid landscapes of North America. His journal is regarded as one of the most useful and entertaining from the War of 1812.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is one of your classic British first-hand journals of the Napoleonic period. What makes this one unique is the fact that its set in the War of 1812. John Le Couteur, a junior subaltern of the 104th Foot, provides an entertaining account of his life up to and including service in British North America.As a cadet officer of the New Royal Military Academy he was not one of your standard gents who purchased rank in the army. Still, we have every indication that our hero comes from a good family, and his numerous connections and frequent name dropping does drag the narrative a bit at times. In fact, were it not for the time spent on campaign, one might come away with the impression that a British officier of the period spent most of his time at soirees and convvial company! Certainly the difference between garrison life at Kingston, and campaigning on the Niagara frontier makes for considerable contrasts.It is important to remember that Le Couteur belonged to a particular class, and despite his humble entrance into the army, his station in life

ensured a respectable reception at most eastblishments of the day. This was especially so in British North America where an officer had good status. While Le C does his rounds in the social set and flirts with the girls, we are reminded of the harsh realities of war. First the epic march in the dead winter of the 104th from Halifax to Montreal and then Kingston, Ontario was one of the major feats of the war. Le C provides a full chapter to chronicle that episode. The difficuties of finding lodging and having to accomodate living with numerous strangers seems almost a daily process for a time when barracks were not common features of garrisons.

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